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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/791,688

03/01/2004

Jeffrey Bergh

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02/10/2006

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EXAMINER

KENNEDY, JOSHUA T

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3679

DATE MAILED: 02/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/791,688

Applicant(s)

BERGH ET AL.

Examiner

Joshua T. Kennedy

Art Unit

3679



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 January 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19, 25-45 and 68-78 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19, 25-45 and 68-78 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-19, 25-45, and 68-78 have been examined.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-19, 25-45, and 68-78 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Newberry, Jr. (US 3,801,072) in view of Gleeson et al (US Patent Application Publication 2001/0047741).

As to Claims 1-4, 9-12, 15-17, 25, 26, 31, 34-36, 42, 68, 70, and 72. Newberry, Jr.

discloses a fence system, comprising:

a mounting surface (20); and

a plurality of individual elongate members or pickets (11) attached to the mounting surface and aligned in a manner so as to form a barrier, wherein the at least one individual member being made into a desired shape for use in a fence prior to curing (Col 1, Lines 35-43), and the at least one individual member having at least one surface that has a pre-finish thereon resembling a wooden picket (Col 1, Lines 29-43);

said plurality of pickets being installed generally perpendicular to a ground surface and in substantially parallel relationship to one another (Fig 1; Col 3, Lines 61-64).

Newberry Jr. does not disclose at least one individual member made of fiber cement whereby the at least one individual member does not exhibit any substantial fraying of the fibers along surfaces of the at least one individual member after curing. Wherein the fiber cement forming the at least one individual member incorporates a low-density additive comprising microspheres or volcanic ash or a combination thereof to moisture resistant cellulose fibers.

Gleeson et al teach a fiber cement building material having cellulose fibers having low density additives of volcanic ash, microspheres or a combination thereof added to moisture resistant cellulose fibers that has "applicability to a number of building product applications, including but not limited to building panels, tie backer board... fencing, and decking" (Par. 107, Lines 1-5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the fence panel and pickets as taught by Newberry to be constructed of the fiber cement building material as taught by Gleeson et al because of its applicability to a number of building product applications, including fencing and it's a lightweight material with "workability at an economical price, as well as improved dimensional stability" (Par. 10) such as a lowered density of the material.

Examiner also notes that the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

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As to Claims 5, 19, 69, and 75. Newberry Jr. discloses the at least one individual member having a first end, said first end being formed into a shape selected from the group consisting of square cut, dog-eared, French gothic, scalloped, pointed and saw-toothed (Fig 1—Shows the pickets with a dog-eared shape).

As to Claims 6, 7, 27, 32 and 76-78. Newberry Jr. discloses the at least one individual member having a first surface, wherein the first surface has a finish that is capable of resembling wood or the color thereof or masonry (Col 1, Lines 39-43).

As to Claims 8 and 28. Newberry Jr. discloses the at least one surface comprising two opposing sides of the individual member (Col 3, Lines 45-58).

As to Claims 13, 14, 43, and 44. Newberry Jr. discloses the mounting surface comprising a pair of mounting rails (20) having a longitudinal axis, and the at least one individual member is positioned in a manner such that a longitudinal axis of the individual members (or pickets) is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the mounting surface, wherein a first mounting rail is secured to the pickets at an upper location of the pickets, and a second mounting rail is secured to the pickets along a lower location of the pickets (Fig 4).

As to Claim 18. Newberry Jr. discloses the at least one individual member having at least one surface that is embossed with a pattern (Col 1, Lines 39-43).

As to Claims 29 and 30. Newberry Jr. discloses at least one exterior surface of the picket being stained or being textured (Col 1, Lines 39-43).

As to Claim 33. Newberry Jr. discloses the picket capable of being nailed onto a fence rail (Col 4, Lines 27-30).

As to Claims 39, 71, and 73. Newberry Jr. discloses a fence system wherein each of said pickets has a length between about 6 and 8 feet (Col 2, Lines 5-7).

As to Claim 45. Newberry Jr. discloses at least two posts, each of said posts having an elongate configuration extending between an upper end and a lower end and being substantially parallel to the pickets, said posts being secured to the mounting rails, wherein the lower ends of the posts extend below the lower ends of the pickets to secure the posts in a ground location (Fig 4; Col 4, Lines 13-15).

As to Claims 37 and 38. Newberry Jr. does not disclose a fence system wherein each of said pickets has an aspect ratio of between 4 and 12 and is spaced from one another by a distance of between about 1/2 and 1 inch. However, it is not inventive to state the optimum or workable values of the size of the blocks. As determined through routine experimentation and optimization, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

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the art to dimension each of said pickets to have an aspect ratio of between 4 and 12 and be spaced from one another by a distance of between about 1/2 and 1 inch so as to achieve the desired aesthetic appearance.

As to Claims 40 and 74. Newberry Jr. does not disclose a fence system wherein each of said pickets has a width between about 4 and 12 inches. However, it is not inventive to state the optimum or workable values of the size of the blocks. As determined through routine experimentation and optimization, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to dimension each of said pickets to have a width between about 4 and 12 inches so as to achieve the desired aesthetic appearance.

As to Claim 41. Newberry Jr. does not disclose a fence system wherein each of said pickets has a thickness of between about 5/16 and 3/4 inch. However, it is not inventive to state the optimum or workable values of the size of the blocks. As determined through routine experimentation and optimization, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to dimension each of said pickets to have a thickness of between about 5/16 and 3/4 inch so as to achieve the desired aesthetic appearance.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 1/24/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

As to Claims 1, 15, 25, 34, 68, and 72, Applicant argues that:

Newberry teaches away from the concept of employing individual members.

Examiner respectfully disagrees as to Claims 1, 15, 25, 34, 68, and 72, because Newberry does not teach away from employing individual members (because one of the panels of Newberry could be considered an individual member) but rather teaches that the cost is excessive because of the manual labor (ie. painting, treating, maintenance, and depleting supplies). It is also noted that a one-piece construction, in place of separate elements fastened together, is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Kohno, 391 F.2d 959, 157 USPQ 275 (CCPA 1968); In re Larson, 340 F.2d 965, 144 USPQ 347 (CCPA 1965).

Applicant additionally argues that:

Gleeson does not disclose or suggest a fiber cement material for use in a fence which is made into a desired shape prior to curing and which does not exhibit any substantial fraying of the fibers on the surface or visible separation of the layers... after curing.... The Applicant respectfully disagrees that fiber cement would be considered suitable fencing which has a partially decorative function by one of ordinary skill in the art.

Examiner respectfully disagrees as to Claims 1, 15, 25, 34, 68, and 72, because Newberry Jr. discloses that the fence panel is made into a desired shape prior to curing (Col 2, Lines 11-21 and 41-58) and it is well known within the art to ensure a member has cured properly, whether it is fiberglass or fiber cement, hence is not exhibiting fraying of any fibers and there is no delamination after the curing has occurred. It is also noted that the specific method of forming is not germane to the issue of patentability of the device itself. Therefore, the limitation "which is made into a desired shape prior to curing and which does not exhibit any substantial fraying of the fibers on the surface or visible separation of the layers... after curing" has been given only limited patentable weight. See MPEP § 2113.

As advanced above, the fiber cement as taught by Gleeson et al would be used in combination with the molding process of Newberry Jr. The fiber cement members are capable of being molded (Gleeson et al, Paragraph 35, Line 1) to the desired shape of the fence, meaning no cutting of cured fiber cements is needed. Thus, it would not exhibit any delamination, fraying, or other damage, which comes as a result of cutting.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

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mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

USPN 6,883,786 to Bebendorf cited to show a fence post and rail assembly having pickets that is capable of being constructed with fiber cement.

USPN 5,452,968 to Dlugosz cited to show a fiber cement construction capable of being used in a fencing system.

USPN 2,721,727 to Eddy III cited to show a wooden picket construction having pickets mounted on rails between two posts.

USPN D252,406 to Dobias cited to show a fence having a plurality of different shapes on one end.

US Patent Application Publication 2002/0059886 to Merkley et al cited to show a method of forming a fiber cement structure, which is capable of being used in fencing construction.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua T. Kennedy whose telephone number is (571) 272-8297. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 7am - 3:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571) 272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JTK
2/1/2006

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel P. Stodola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" being the most prominent part.

DANIEL P. STODOLA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600